

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 9-12 and 15-31 were pending in this application prior to this amendment. Claims 9-12, 15, 16 26-28, 30 and 31 were allowed in the Office Action. Claims 17, 18, 20-25 and 29 were rejected. Claim 19 was objected to. Applicant has cancelled claims 19, 22, 25 and 29 and amended claim 17. Reconsideration of claims 17, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 24 and allowance of claims 9-12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26-28, 30 and 31 is hereby respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 22 and 29, which were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, have been cancelled.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 19 has been cancelled but the claimed features of said claim 19 has been introduced in claim 17 so that claim 17 now complies with 35 U.S.C. §102. Claims 18,20, 21, 23 and 24 also comply with 35 U.S.C. §102, as they depend from claim 17.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe that the present application and claims 9-12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26-28, 30 and 31 are in proper condition for allowance. Such allowance is hereby requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims. The marked-up version is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made".

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any payments which are due in connection with this response to Deposit Account No. 19-0615 (Ref. 57.0291US)

Respectfully submitted,



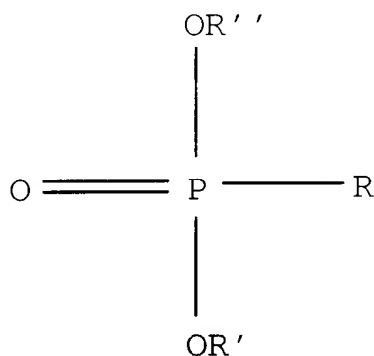
Stephen Schlather
Reg. No. 45,081
Attorney for Applicants

Date: *March 5, 2003*
Schlumberger Technology Corporation
IP Dept. Well Stimulation
110 Schlumberger Drive, MD1
Ph: 281-285-4490
Fax: 281-285-8569

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW THE CHANGES MADE

Claim 17 has been amended as follows:

17. (twice amended) A drilling fluid being water-based and having an inhibitive component to reduce the hydration of shale further comprising an additive in accordance with the formula



where R, R' and R'' are groups exclusively containing H atoms or combinations of H, C, O or P atoms up to a maximum of 100 atoms, for reducing cuttings accretion and bit balling